

Relations industrielles  
Industrial Relations



Economic Development and the Church in French Canada  
Le développement économique du Canada français et l'Église catholique

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Volume 21, numéro 3, 1966

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/027699ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/027699ar>

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Éditeur(s)

Département des relations industrielles de l'Université Laval

ISSN

0034-379X (imprimé)

1703-8138 (numérique)

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Citer cet article

Ryan, S.J., W. (1966). Economic Development and the Church in French Canada. *Relations industrielles / Industrial Relations*, 21(3), 381–405.  
<https://doi.org/10.7202/027699ar>

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Résumé de l'article

Cette étude nous a permis de constater nombre de choses intéressantes entre autres : qu'il n'est pas exact de prétendre que l'Église catholique ait exercé une influence négative déterminante dans le développement économique qui s'est manifesté au Canada français durant la période 1886-1914. Loïn d'être une entrave, il est possible d'affirmer que cette Église s'est probablement montrée plus consciente du facteur économique et s'y est plus directement identifiée que ne le font généralement les Églises anglo-saxonnes. Nous avons constaté de plus que l'enseignement théologique ou religieux créait le pas aux questions économiques et culturelles et que loin d'être effrayée par le phénomène d'industrialisation interne qui se manifestait alors, l'Église reflétait la canalisation cette énergie vers des buts sociaux et culturels, et ne fut pas submergée les valeurs nationales et religieuses. Le grand problème de l'époque était pas l'explosion économique mais plutôt l'immigration en masse vers les États-Unis. Il s'agissait bien plus d'une crise raciale que religieuse, même si l'on identifiait alors « français » et « catholique ».

Au nombre des changements importants qui recurent l'appui de l'Église à cette époque, figurent l'avènement du syndicalisme, et la mise en place d'associations de tout genre axées sur le principe de la coopération qui allait permettre aux Canadiens-français toujours foncièrement individualistes, de grouper leurs forces en vue de rattrapper le terrain perdu sur le plan économique, sans pour cela perdre de vue la protection des valeurs spirituelles constamment menacées par les influences étrangères. L'intérêt moins marqué pour l'agriculture s'expliquait par le fait que nombreux étaient ceux qui vivaient dans l'essor industriel une solution de rechange valable qui permettrait d'écarter l'immigration en masse vers les États-Unis. Ceux qui raisonnaient ainsi oublièrent qu'en fait les Canadiens français avaient très peu à dire dans la mise en place des nouvelles structures, car aussi longtemps qu'ils continuèrent à former la masse des travailleurs non spécialisés, l'agriculture resterait pour eux un débouché incertain, non pour une simple question de religion, mais tout simplement parce que c'était ce domaine qui leur était le plus familier et où ils pouvaient espérer rester maîtres de leur destinée et se sentir économiquement libres.

Il est assez étonnant de constater avec quelle facilité le curé de paroisse, dont la formation et l'expérience étaient pourtant d'un tout autre ordre, savait non seulement apprécier les besoins et les aspirations de ses ouailles, mais aussi leur servir d'intermédiaire avec le monde extérieur et les hommes d'affaires anglo-saxons. Ce qui surprend peut-être encore plus c'est de voir la multiplicité des mesures qu'employaient les évêques et les prêtres qui, tout en encourageant le développement économique, voulaient éviter qu'il ait comme conséquence de détourner les hommes de Dieu. Notre étude n'a porté jusqu'ici que sur l'influence des évêques et des curés, mais il ne faudrait pas oublier pour autant de mentionner ce secteur important du clergé que formaient les professeurs et les écrivains dont il est si souvent fait mention dans toutes les études traitant du Canada français.

Ces professeurs et écrivains, étant moins directement engagés que les autres membres du clergé, pouvaient plus facilement raisonner sur le plan idéologique, critiquer plus librement, et parfois même se laisser aller à la révérence. Leur situation particulière à l'intérieur de la société leur permettait une sphère de rayonnement beaucoup plus étendue que celle des évêques et des simples curés : de plus, leurs études classiques et leurs connaissances de la rhétorique et de la littérature, leur permettaient d'exprimer leurs idées avec beaucoup plus de force et d'assurance. Nous trouvons dans leurs rangs des hommes de très grande valeur : Mgr Lefebvre, dont les réalisations dépassaient de beaucoup celles de tout autre personne durant cette période de l'histoire de la province de Québec et qui, en plus d'encourager de meilleures techniques d'apprentissage et de développement rationnel de la forêt, fit un effort réel pour vulgariser les techniques concernant l'exploitation forestière, la connaissance des sols et le développement des ressources hydrauliques ; Mgr Lapointe, homme d'action qui se dépensa sans compter pour que s'instaure un royaume agricole et industriel dans la région du Saguenay ; l'abbé Bailly, à qui l'on doit le premier traité canadien d'économie politique ; et enfin les moines de la Trappe d'Oka qui, à l'année en année, introduirent les méthodes d'enseignement de leur école et publièrent quantité d'ouvrages concernant la science agricole.

Il se trouvait par ailleurs dans ce groupe des hommes timorés, prophètes de malheur, beaucoup plus familiers avec tout ce qui se passait à Rome, en Grèce ou en France qu'avec les nouvelles lignes de pensée qui avaient cours dans la province et dans leur ville ; peut-être de bonne foi, mais bien naïvement, ils laissaient croire aux parents qu'il suffisait à leurs enfants d'avoir une éducation commerciale de quatre à cinq ans pour se valoir une place enviable dans le commerce ou l'industrie. Il faudrait mentionner aussi ceux qui, n'ayant aucune expérience pratique en agriculture et des connaissances très superficielles quant aux ressources agricoles de la province, restaient enfermés dans leur tour d'éivoire et encourageaient l'immigration vers le nord, vers ce pays de rochers du boudoir canadien, ignorant complètement l'essor industriel et le phénomène d'urbanisation qui éclataient de toute part.

Que dire de ces idées nationalisées qui, en dépit des mises en garde de l'épiscopat, se mirent à enseigner à toutes une génération d'étudiants des collèges que la race et la religion sont intimement liées et qu'il faut regretter tout compromise ? Que dire aussi des journalistes qui, — comme plusieurs de leurs contemporains laïques — préféraient se disputer des batailles de mots avec tous ceux qui différaient d'opinion avec eux, tout particulièrement au sujet des questions concernant la réforme de l'enseignement, plutôt que de proposer des solutions pratiques acceptables tout comme les évêques et les curés, plus proches de la réalité, avaient été obligés de trouver ?

Il y avait aussi tous ces tribuns qui cherchaient à faire oublier aux Canadiens français leur statut d'infériorité sur le plan social et industriel en faisant miroiter à leurs yeux le mythe, qu'inconsciemment ils chérissaient dans leur cœur : la mission qu'ils avaient héritée de la France, fille aînée de l'Église, de civiliser et christianiser les peuples du monde — rôle qui, disaient-ils, était de beaucoup supérieur aux aspirations purement matérielles des anglo-saxons.

Nous trouvons enfin dans cette catégorie les prêtres missionnaires agricoles et colonisateurs, dont plusieurs étaient des curés, ceux-ci, en raison de leur fonction particulière, étaient des partisans, des propagandistes. Leur rôle était alors double de se servir des valeurs spirituelles et nationales pour atteindre leur objectif : enseigner à la population de mieux apprécier la dignité d'une agriculture intelligente et la gloire de conquérir et de défricher des terres boisées au nom de la race et de la religion. Il est évident qu'il serait plutôt osé de considérer l'un quelconque des prêtres de cette catégorie comme étant vraiment représentatif de l'opinion du clergé canadien-français.

Sur le sujet très épineux de l'éducation nous nous limiterons ici à quelques brèves observations. L'Église avec ses ressources financières et son apport de personnel a usé de toute son influence morale pour encourager la fréquentation scolaire et améliorer la qualité de l'enseignement dispensé au niveau primaire. Par ailleurs, elle refusait catégoriquement de céder quelque parcelle que ce soit de son influence prédominante qui était sienné dans ce domaine pour permettre à l'État de légiférer concernant l'enseignement obligatoire et gratuit, l'uniformité des programmes. Elle refusait de systématiquement de laisser le gouvernement créer un ministère de l'éducation. L'Église, de plus, tenait farouchement aux programmes d'étude de ses collèges classiques et insistait pour que le nouveau secteur de l'enseignement technique opère en parallèle avec ces collèges, sans changer ceux-ci en écoles spécialisées. Du reste, en général, l'Église demandait son aggrégé à l'enseignement technique et scientifique, mais restait sur le qui-vive craignant que ce nouveau type d'enseignement ne devienne le cheval de Troie qui, sournoisement, permettrait à l'école neutre d'envahir la place forte de l'école confessionnelle à l'intérieur de la province.

Il est possible de croire que si selon une perspective économique l'Église a pu faire fuir route dans ce domaine, c'est précisément pour avoir érigé et maintenu l'équivalent d'un mur de Chine destiné à protéger suivant elle des valeurs vitales : culture, langue et intégrité de la religion. L'économie n'avait pourtant ainsi rien à faire avec cette action. On peut se demander si cette muraille avait besoin d'être érigée aussi imposante et aussi hermétique pour atteindre cette fin. Cette décision, beaucoup plus que l'importe quelle autre, ne fut pas en définitive la cause de l'état d'infériorité des Canadiens français dans le domaine économique, état de chose qui a toujours découlé du manque de communication. Le peuple s'ignorait et vivait en marge du monde des affaires anglo-saxons. Ce n'est quel tout dernièrement que le gouvernement s'est enfin décidé à secourir les efforts de la nouvelle vague des entrepreneurs canadiens-français, des ingénieurs et des scientifiques, et de les mettre en position de concurrencer leurs rivaux anglo-saxons grâce solidement en place et bénéficiant d'une situation privilégiée.

Finalement, comment expliquer le décalage existant entre l'effort déployé par l'Église, et les nombreuses initiatives qu'elle a non crédité dans le domaine du développement économique, et les maigres résultats obtenus. Il est évident que l'essor économique qui s'est manifesté à différents degrés à l'intérieur du Québec ne peut être attribué aux seules attitudes et initiatives de l'Église catholique, quelque importante que fut sa contribution, mais est plutôt attribuable à des facteurs plus tangibles tels que : l'apport d'entreprises, l'abondance de capital et le savoir faire technique. Rien dans notre étude permet de conclure, comme certains l'ont fait à priori, que la religion peut retarder le développement économique ou encore que le spirituel soit l'ennemi du matériel. Au contraire notre étude nous a convaincu que les intérêts de l'Église et ceux de l'économie pouvaient très bien aller de pair. À ce sujet disons que nous acceptons avec beaucoup de réserves les conclusions de certaines études, à l'effet qu'il est assez facile d'identifier les comportements économiques aux doctrines théologiques. Au contraire, notre étude nous incite à croire qu'il est parfois extrêmement difficile, à l'intérieur d'un certain comportement économique, d'isoler l'influence religieuse de l'influence éthique et culturelle, et d'ignorer l'incidence du fait minoritaire de tout un groupe.

Les recherches qu'il nous faudrait faire pour compléter cette étude et lui donner une portée plus générale seraient :

- 1.—De voir qu'elles ont été les attitudes et initiatives prises, durant la même période, par les Églises catholiques de la minorité anglo-saxonne du Québec ;
- 2.—De pousser plus nos recherches et d'étudier de plus près : (a) quelle a été la conséquence du contrôle quasi exclusif qu'a exercé l'Église durant cette période dans le domaine de l'éducation ; (b) d'établir si est bien vrai que la vocation de prêtres, de frères ou de sœurs s'allie difficilement au rôle d'éducateurs chargés de former les citoyens de demain et (c) de voir dans quelle mesure les études classiques sont responsables du peu d'intérêt manifesté par le peuple pour tout ce qui touche à la technique et au savoir faire scientifique ;
- 3.—D'examiner de plus près la situation qui existait dans la région de Montréal, tout particulièrement dans des centres comme Saint-Henri et Lachine qui, croyons-nous, refléteraient assez fidèlement l'action de l'Église dans tous les petits centres de la province ;
- 4.—De compléter nos données fragmentaires concernant les biens de l'Église, ses revenus en propre et ses placements, de manière à pouvoir contrôler de plus près l'exactitude de certaines conclusions.

Il serait intéressant de voir comment cadrent les conclusions de notre étude sur le plan international en examinant celles qui ont été, dans un autre pays catholique, les tendances de développement économique. Il faudrait choisir de préférence, un pays où le nationalisme, la survivance raciale et le fait minoritaire ne sont pas intimement liés aux intérêts de la religion catholique, et où l'essor industriel dépend directement, non d'une caste étrangère mais bien des ressortissants catholiques eux-mêmes. Une telle étude permettrait de mieux comprendre jusqu'à quel point le facteur religion peut jouer, indépendamment du facteur ethnique et national, dans le processus du développement économique. Il faudrait de plus voir, non seulement dans quelle mesure l'Église est capable d'adapter son système éducatif plus efficace quand elle exerce un contrôle absolu et une influence déterminante dans le domaine des affaires et du commerce, mais aussi jusqu'à quel point, dans ces conditions, le curé de paroisse peut continuer à servir d'intermédiaire entre le monde extérieur et les tendances qui s'y manifestent et ceux qui le reconnaissent comme chef de file, et ont foi dans son jugement. Il faudrait enfin voir dans quelle mesure la philosophie agricole peut varier parallèlement aux fluctuations du cycle économique comme cela semble être le cas au Canada français.

Une étude poussée dans cette direction nous permettrait de mieux juger comment il serait possible de canaliser la force de l'Église en vue de promouvoir le développement économique des pays catholiques moins favorisés et de neutraliser, dans la mesure du possible, les reculs qui pourraient découler d'attitudes qui, comme le démontre notre étude, n'ont pas de relations directes avec son enseignement et sa théologie mais découlent plutôt de réalités concrètes étrangères au facteur religieux.

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# Economic Development and the Church in French Canada \*

William F. Ryan, S.J.

*The author has chosen to dwell at some length of the methodology, limitations and general conclusions of his research project — his doctoral thesis presented at Harvard University. Among the more interesting findings of this research is the following: there appears to be little hard evidence that the Catholic Church exercised a significantly negative influence on the economic spurt that took place in Quebec in the period 1896-1914.*

## Introduction

It has become almost commonplace to say that Catholicism or the Catholic Church has impeded economic development in the French Canadian province of Quebec.<sup>1</sup> Our interest here is to discover how this allegation stands up in the face of detailed research into Quebec's economic development. Such research while directly concerning only the particular situation existing in French Canada, nevertheless, has an important though indirect bearing on the more general question of whether there is a stable relationship between a man's religious beliefs and his economic activity, and is especially relevant to any discussion of the popular belief that in currently « underdeveloped » countries the Catholic Church often exercises a negative influence on economic progress both through her teachings and peculiar authoritative structure.

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\* This article is a substance of talks presented by the author, in recent months, to meetings of the Canadian Political Science Association, the Montreal Historical Association, and other groups, on his doctoral research.

(1) For example, see S.D. CLARK, « Religious Factor in Canadian Economic Development », *Journal of Economic History*, Supplement VII (1947), pp. 93, 95; and CONRAD LANGLOIS, « Cultural Reasons given for the French Canadian Lag in Economic Progress », *Culture XXI* (1960), p. 163.

I must forewarn you that you may find my present exposition a little like an iceberg — with only the tip showing on the surface, for my paper is itself a very compact summary of a much larger study — my doctoral thesis presented at Harvard University which will, I hope, be published soon by the Laval University Press.<sup>2</sup> Rather than present a detailed study of any one aspect of this complicated problem, I have chosen to dwell at some length on the methodology, limitations, and general conclusions of my research project. The result is that I must forego any extended discussion on such very interesting and controversial subjects as the exact size and nature of the economic spurt that took place in Quebec prior to World War I, the influence of Catholic education on economic activity, and the method used to evaluate the significance of the Church's influence on the economic development that actually did occur. The conclusions, being general, will inevitably exceed the evidence presented here, which is selected more for its illustrative than for its conclusive character. However, the discussion period will help to make up for some of these oversimplifications in my presentation.

### Methodology

This is a case study on the influence exercised by the Catholic Church on the economic spurt that took place in the province of Quebec between 1896 and 1914, a period in which some students claim Canada experienced her « take-off ». For methodological purposes we sidestep the ambiguous concept of « Catholicism » in favour of the concrete institution that is its empirical source, namely, the Catholic Church, which we arbitrarily define as the élite or powerstructure of that Church. The Church, in this study, is resumed in those who have authority to teach, interpret doctrine, enforce policy, and organize action towards specific goals in the name of the whole Church, that is, the bishops, the priests, and the authorized Catholic teachers, together with the organizations, institutions, movements, and publications immediately inspired or directed by them. In other words, instead of trying to study Catholic economic *attitudes*, as most authors have in the past, we prefer to adopt the approach of studying the process of *Catholic-attitude-formation* in concrete circumstances, for the latter appears to be more easily observed and controlled. The primary emphasis is, therefore, rather on the élite

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(2) WILLIAM F. RYAN, S.J., « Economic Development and the Church in French Canada, 1896-1914 ». Unpublished doctoral thesis, Harvard University, 1963.

who legitimately teach and interpret value orientations, and only secondarily on the community of the faithful who accept, ignore, or reject this guidance in an ambiguous degree.

The choice of the « spurt » or « take-off » years, 1896-1914, has the advantage of presenting us with a period at once economically significant and at least potentially suited to shed some light on similar spurt periods in other countries in which every effort is currently being made to launch rapid economic development — and this quite independently of whether we accept or reject the various assumptions underlying Rostow's theory of the stages of economic growth. Such a spurt period reveals rapid structural and institutional changes which a powerful, homogeneous Church, such as the Church in French Canada, cannot be expected to ignore, and so we can rightfully expect to observe interaction between this « economic development » and the « Church », and an attempt on the latter's part to exert an influence on this process of change in which she may be willy-nilly involved. There is no question here of attempting to prove that the Church's influence is the determining variable in this process of economic growth, but rather of merely studying the role — positive, negative, or neutral — which the Church plays in this dynamic process, which obviously in most cases was initiated by agents other than she.

Our method of procedure is roughly as follows: We begin by merely adverting to the economic development that took place during this period to enable us better to situate, understand, and evaluate the influence of the Church therein. Then we turn to some detailed research in specific regions. Ideally, Montreal should be the object of such study. But here the phenomena of industrialization and Church influence and their interaction are too complex and subtle to be the object of a pioneer study using quite unsophisticated tools of analysis. In an attempt to side-step this methodological problem without pretending in any way to minimize the capital importance of the metropolitan area of Montreal in Quebec's economic development, we propose rather to study in some detail two other regions which were experiencing industrial revolutions at this time, even if in strictly quantitative terms they were of much less importance than that taking place in Montreal. They are the St. Maurice River Valley and the Saguenay-Lake St. John region, where large-scale developments of hydraulic and electric power were just getting underway. Precisely because industrialization was just getting underway in these regions, it is much easier to detect the Church's

attitudes and actions than in an older industrial city such as Montreal. Then too, we can expect that the changes that took place in these regions during this period will have more in common with the phenomenon of current development in underdeveloped areas.

The market contrast between these two regions will also help us to understand better the total process of economic development, for, while the St. Maurice Valley is almost exclusively an industrial region, industry grew up side by side with land settlement and agriculture in the Saguenay-Lake St. John region. Both regions have for our study the added advantage of containing a cathedral town from which pastoral letters and directives are regularly issued by the local bishops to direct the Catholic clergy and faithful.

The heart of the study consists in an attempt to evaluate how typical our findings in these two regions are in the light of a much more general view on the changes taking place in the rest of the province. This discussion is grouped under such headings as settlement, communications, agriculture, industry, and education. In our conclusion we briefly summarize the key attitudes and initiatives adopted by the Church during the development spurt, note how they changed or were modified during this period, and attempt to evaluate very roughly their significance for the economic development that actually occurred. The study is then related to the general discussion on the connection between religion and economic development. And, finally, some suggestions of possible lines of future research to enrich the study are indicated.

### **Limitations**

A few further observations on the limitations of our study. Quite clearly, our research has nothing to contribute directly to the discussion inaugurated by Max Weber as to whether religion exercised an important influence on the genesis of the industrial revolution. That is a matter of disputed historical fact and has nothing to do with French Canada in the 20th Century. Our empirical study does, nevertheless, have some bearing on the current discussion among economists as to whether there is an inconsistency between religious attitudes and growth attitudes, between «the religious ethos» and the «development ethos» as they are sometimes called, for without such detailed empirical study, this latter discussion, however useful, risks falling into an empty exercise in logic or of becoming a mere repetition of platitudes.

A study such as ours is obviously handicapped by the fact that this relationship between the Church and economic development is seldom treated explicitly or in detail in economic and historical studies. But a more worrisome limitation and one we freely admit — is that our study does not include separate detailed research into the Church's property holdings, her sources and methods of collecting revenue, and especially the nature and size of her investments during this period. Our reason for not undertaking such research is at once simple and decisive — fully reliable sources were not easily accessible. And we preferred not to yield to the easy temptation of substituting popular speculation for facts in this controversial area. And, in the sequel, this lacuna did not seem to prove to be the major obstacle foreseen. By watching how the Church acted in many different concrete situations and by using our fragmentary information to the full we feel we have discovered the rôle of the Church in economic development — at least, in its essentials.

We do not intend to study directly the very interesting question of why the French Canadians themselves seem to have played such a minor rôle in initiating industrialization in French Canada, except insofar as this question overlaps our own particular subject matter. In actual fact, the Church was, of course, always preoccupied with the rôle which French Canadians played in the development process, but that did not prevent her from encouraging or discouraging various initiatives undertaken by English Canadians and Americans, both Catholic and Protestant. And we will touch on the question of the rôle of the French Canadians in the development process at least indirectly when we discuss the Church's rôle in education over which she had considerable control at that time.

As for confronting the famous « agriculturalist » thesis, so dear to the hearts of some French Canadian historians and social scientists,<sup>3</sup> who contend that the chief economic preoccupation of the vast majority of French Canadian intellectuals, and, a fortiori, of Catholic clergymen, was to direct *all* French Canadians towards agriculture — we will, by the very nature of our study, turn up much empirical evidence bearing on it in our particular period, but we will not attempt to corroborate or refute it for other periods of Canadian economic history. Likewise,

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(3) See, for example, MICHEL BRUNET, « Trois Dominantes de la pensée canadienne-française : l'agriculturalisme, l'anti-étatisme, et le messianisme. Essai d'histoire intellectuelle », *Ecrits du Canada français*, III (1957), pp. 33-117.

we forego any serious discussion on the very 'iffy' question of what French Canadian economic development might have been like had French Canada not been largely protected from the secularizing effects of the French Revolution and such other major charges as tended to create a more clear-cut separation between Church and State, and to reduce the Church's influence considerably by confronting her with a strong anti-clerical state.

Finally, we make no attempt to portray the Church as a great champion of economic development or to judge whether or not that should be an integral part of her mission in these particular circumstances. Nor do we enter into a discussion on whether economic initiatives should be the exclusive domain of the layman. We merely try to accumulate and analyse sufficient empirical evidence to arrive at some tentative conclusions on what the church in fact did — and perhaps what she is likely to do elsewhere — under conditions of an initial economic spurt.

## General Conclusions

### THE ECONOMIC SPURT: 1896-1914

The key point, which unfortunately we can only mention here, is that, contrary to Rostow's opinion,<sup>4</sup> Quebec participated fully in the important economic spurt that took place in Canada in this period. As André Raynauld has demonstrated, and the statistical studies of Gordon Bertram confirm,<sup>5</sup> the rate of growth in industrial production has not been noticeably slower since Confederation in Quebec than in the Canadian bell-wether province of Ontario.

Our own detailed study of the decade, 1900-1910, reveals it as one of very rapid growth and structural change in Quebec manufactures. The total gross value of production in constant dollars (1900 = 100)

(4) W.W. ROSTOW, *The Stages of Economic Growth* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1960), p. 18.

(5) ANDRÉ RAYNAULD, *Croissance et structure économique de la province de Québec* (Quebec: Ministry of Industry and Commerce, 1961), p. 29; and GORDON BERTRAM, « Historical Statistics on Growth and Structure of Manufacturing in Canada, 1870-1957 », Paper read before the Canadian Political Science Association, Hamilton, Canada, June 11, 1962, p. 22. Actually Bertram found that Ontario had a slight edge on Quebec in the annual average rate of growth which she experienced prior to World War I in total gross value of her manufactures. Raynauld had found the exact opposite — but the differences in percentage terms are minimal.

increased by 74.9 per cent, or at annual rate (compound rate) of 5.79 per cent, in spite of two short-lived, minor recessions in 1903 and 1908. And total value added in manufacturing increased by 81.6 per cent in the same decade, or at an annual compound rate of 6.14 per cent.<sup>6</sup> The period 1890-1910 was also a sort of golden age in Quebec agriculture compared with the lean years of the earlier decades. The shift to dairy farming was the decisive factor in this evolution, but it happily coincided with, and was strongly encouraged by the opening of new industrial and city markets which gave formerly routine farmers solid incentive to adopt new methods to improve both the quantity and quality of their products.

In brief, our own research confirms Raynauld's conclusion that there was a period of rapid economic development and industrialization in Quebec at the turn of this century, and that this province, in spite of serious demographic problems which kept its per capita income somewhat below the national average, still fully shared in Canada's economic spurt or « take-off » during this period. In the absence of more refined economic indicators of per capita income and of capital formation, no attempt is made here to verify or reject Raynauld's contention that this was for Quebec her Rostovian « take-off ». Even so, it is clear that whatever problems of distribution and reorientation of industry still remained to be solved by Quebecers after World War I, their Province had sufficiently developed by that time for her problem to have little in common with those of present-day underdeveloped countries.

#### ST. MAURICE RIVER VALLEY

This valley was destined within a few decades to be transformed from a wilderness dotted with a few sawmills and subsistence farming settlements into the world's biggest supplier of newsprint and for a time the forerunner in Quebec's aluminum and chemical industries. Here we can watch how the Church reacts when directly confronted with the massive changes that are part and parcel of industrialization at a time and in an area where she still has great influence over the general population even if less over the employers, who were ordinarily neither Catholic, nor French, nor even Canadian.

(6) These are our own personal estimates which we have chosen, in the interests of brevity, not to spell out here. See WILLIAM F. RYAN, S.J., *op. cit.*, Appendix I & II, p. 425-454.



Quite unexpectedly, we find that it is Bishop Louis Laflèche of Trois Rivières, one of the alleged prophets of the « agriculturalists, »<sup>7</sup> who dampened the ardour of the settlement movement in this region as early as 1879 by clearly advising the promoter of the movement, Curé Labelle, that the arid, rocky soil of the St. Maurice Valley unfitted it for agriculture, but that its abundant timber, minerals, and waterpower promised it a prosperous future in industry.<sup>8</sup> In fact, the old bishop himself made the arduous trip to Grand-Mère, in 1887, to bless the first big pulp mill in the valley and took occasion to exhort the labourers to hard work and to express his best wishes to the management for the progress of their new enterprise.<sup>9</sup> This is a typical example of how definitely positive the Church's attitude to economic progress seems to have been in this region. For whether we consider the little farming villages of St. Boniface and St. Michel, the small pulp and paper towns of Grand-Mère and La Tuque, or the bigger industrial centres of Shawinigan and Trois Rivières, the same attitude is easily discernible.

In the countryside a similar story is repeated in parish after parish. It seems to be the parish priest or curé who organizes not only the Church but the entire enterprise of settlement — including bringing in settlers, seeking government help, organizing public works such as the schools, roads, etc., as well as improving agriculture and introducing the new dairy industry.<sup>10</sup> At Grand-Mère, it is Curé L. Laflèche who works in intimate partnership with Georges Chahoon, the young American manager of the new Laurentide Paper Company, for the progress of this new industrial town.<sup>11</sup> At La Tuque, it is Curé E. Corbeil who identifies his life with the religious, civic, and economic life of this frontier town. Together with the enterprising Brown family of Berlin, New Hampshire, he leads and pushes this hastily fashioned community forward towards the fulfillment of his dreams of them becoming an

(7) See, for example, M. BRUNET, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.

(8) Letter from Mgr. L. Laflèche to Curé Labelle, November 18, 1879; cited by Mason Wade, *The French Canadians 1760-1945*, p. 433.

(9) *Cinquante ans — paroisse Saint-Paul de Grand-Mère, 1899-1949*, Brochure in the Archives of the Séminaire de Trois-Rivières.

10 For example, see T. BOUCHER, *Mauricie d'autrefois* (Collection régionale) No 11; Trois-Rivières: Editions du Bien Public, 1952, pp. 159-209; and also the same author in « La Grand-Mère », (unpublished manuscript, Archives of the Séminaire de Trois-Rivières, 1952), pp. 25-26.

(11) See, for example, *Le Digeste*, (The Laurentide Paper Company's News bulletin), Vol. I, No. 32, May 28, 1919, where the Curé Laflèche is described as « identified with everything that spelt the progress and welfare of the town ».

educated, cultured and prosperous people.<sup>12</sup> In the bigger industrial centres of Shawinigan and Trois Rivières, the role of the clergy, while more discreet, was still remarkably positive. For example, one need only glance at the Catholic diocesan newspaper, *Le Bien Public*, to convince oneself that its editors are consistently promoters of every form of progress in the region in industry, agriculture thrift, and education. During those years *Le Bien Public* lived up to the aims outlined for it by its editor-in-chief, Joseph Barnard:

Founded not only to promote the moral interest but also the material interest of our region, *Le Bien Public* intends (« a à coeur ») to second every effort and every generous idea ; it fights as much as possible prejudice and party spirit, these two morbid principles which we find at the turn of every road opposing every effort and discouraging every initiative.

We form part of a commercial and industrial centre of the first order ; our city surrounded by five small towns and important parishes asks only to grow ; by working with all its force for the progress of the region, *Le Bien Public* is striving to destroy the legend which holds that the name Catholic and French are synonymous with carelessness in business and stagnation in industrial matters. This legend is stupid and false here as elsewhere. And to prove it, *Le Bien Public* is working hard to make known and to second every good initiative, whether individual or collective ; for, with Monseigneur our Bishop, we can say : « how many praiseworthy actions, generous initiatives, fruitful experiences, progressive measures, happen every day in our midst, which could become matter of edification and emulation if only they were known publicly. » (Mgr. F.X. Cloutier, « *Le Bien Public* », *Mandements, lettres pastorales, circulaires* (Circulaire No. 92, le 7 janvier, 1911), p. 221.<sup>13</sup>

## THE SAGUENAY-LAKE ST. JOHN REGION

But did the Church welcome and promote industry in the St. Maurice Valley merely because agriculture had no future there? This question is relevant since Professor A.R.M. Lower, among others, contends that in Quebec the Church did not welcome industry too warmly in

(12) See, for example, LUCIEN DESBIENS, *Au coeur de la Mauricie : La Tuque*, (« Pages trifluviennes », Série A, No 8, Trois-Rivières : Editions du Bien Public, 1933), p. 43.

(13) JOSEPH BARNARD, « La bonne Presse », *Premier congrès d'action sociale du diocèse des Trois-Rivières, 1912 : compte rendu* (Trois-Rivières : Le Bien Public, 1912), p. 52.

regions where agriculture had preceded industry.<sup>14</sup> The Saguenay-Lake St. John region, where agriculture and land settlement progressed simultaneously with the pulp and paper industry presents us with a good opportunity to test Lower's general thesis — especially since it was with specific reference to this region that he established it.

We can pass over here the persevering and extensive efforts of the clergy to promote land settlement and more efficient agriculture in this region. Less is perhaps known about their persistent efforts to promote the building of roads and railroads to link their region with the markets of the province. The active enthusiastic cooperation of three successive bishops, Mgrs. Racine, Bégin, and Labrecque, with the Quebec-Lake St. John Railway Company and the local and federal governments to provide the region with adequate railway facilities is especially noteworthy.<sup>15</sup>

In the Saguenay it is easy to find numerous examples of local curés in smaller towns and villages involved in promoting local industry, railroads, roads electrification, etc. The Curé Lizotte of Roberval is typical. One of his contemporaries could truthfully write of him:

Father Lizotte left an indelible memory on the population of Roberval. As curé until 1900, he took an active part in the development of Roberval; his presbytery was the rendez-vous of all the principal businessmen not only of Roberval but of the whole region and even of Quebec City...<sup>16</sup>

But perhaps most interesting of all in the Saguenay is the Church's reaction to the introduction of the new pulp industry into the region, in 1898, on the initiative of the French Canadian Compagnie de Pulpe de Chicoutimi under the dominating influence of its general manager, Alfred Dubuc. The clergy had always been friendly with the Price family whose name had hitherto been synonymous with industry in this

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(14) A.R.M. LOWER, *Settlement and the Forest Frontier*, Vol. IX of *Canadian Frontiers of Settlement*, ed. W.A. Mackintosh and W.L.G. Joerg (Toronto: Mac-Millan Co., 1936), p. 133.

(15) A collection of this interesting correspondence is to be found in the Episcopal Archives of Chicoutimi under the title « Chemins de fer ». An indication that the clergy's initiatives in this area were at least on occasion effective is a letter written by Prime Minister, John A. Macdonald to Mgr. Racine, July 2, 1886, in which he tells the bishop that the federal government will make the requested grant for the railway. He continues, « I write this information in consequence of the great earnestness with which you have pressed this enterprise so important to the part of the country where you reside and preside ».

(16) *Le Progrès du Saguenay*, June 18, 1914.

region. But now that it was a French Canadian company that unleashed a new era of progress and prosperity, the enthusiasm of the clergy knew no bounds. There is no more talk in official documents and newspapers about the French Canadians being « an agricultural race ». *L'Oiseau Mouche*, the little paper of the Minor Seminary (collège classique), which a few years before had been hymning the « blade of grass » as the source of national prosperity,<sup>17</sup> now becomes equally ecstatic about the new pulp industry.

The first ton of pulp had scarcely emerged from the mill when Abbé Alfred Tremblay holdly committed to print the dreams that were already being dreamed concerning the rosy industrial future of Chicoutimi and the Saguenay. As the population moves northward he foresees that the main route in Canada will pass through Winnipeg, Abitibi, Lake St. John and Chicoutimi, and then continue on to Tadoussac — the future ocean port of the region — and Labrador:

Chicoutimi will thus attract to herself a share of the commerce of New York, Boston, Montreal and Quebec; it will be a centre of the most extensive commerce of the continent in timber, pulp and paper; it will sell almost as much wheat as Winnipeg, more butter and cheese than Montreal, as many furs as Nijni-Novgorod. It will become an enormous city eclipsing New York — and, believe me, a proud one...<sup>18</sup>

For the moment, all thought of the decadence of big cities seems to be forgotten in the excitement of believing that one day Chicoutimi will itself be a big city! The inspiration had been given and French Canadian enthusiasm was exuberant. The Minor Seminary even added a « business class » to its commercial course to help prepare local boys to take their rightful place in the new industry.<sup>19</sup>

Even if each new pulp mill receives the Church's official blessing and encouragement, it is still the big pulp mill at Chicoutimi that remains the darling of the clergy. Dubuc, its general manager, was knighted by the Pope in 1904, at the request of Mgr. Labrecque, and its president, Mr. N. Garneau, received the following warm message from the bishop:

(17) *L'Oiseau Mouche*, May 2, 1895.

(18) *L'Oiseau Mouche*, February 12, 1898.

(19) « Report of School Inspectors », *Sessional Papers XXXI* (1897), Part II, 94-95. These priest professors were sure they would get quick results. We find one of them expressing his hopes in *L'Oiseau Mouche* (June 19, 1897). He is optimistic that one of the rich businessmen whom they will prepare will later endow their Seminary with a chapel which they badly need!

To give evidence of my interest is not only an act of justice but also an act of legitimate gratitude. We owe the present prosperity of Chicoutimi to the Pulp Company. Furthermore, I will make it my duty always and on every occasion to express my gratitude to the Directors of this company whose spirit of progress in the right sense, and especially its genuinely Christian flavour I appreciate as they deserve... We will work together to preserve among the working people those Christian sentiments that distinguish them, for their greater personal good, and for the success of your industry for which I wish the greatest prosperity.<sup>20</sup>

These few examples are indicative of the positive attitude which many of the clergy adopted towards economic development at this time. Here the bishops and their clergy were certainly « friends of economic progress »; and many of the latter worked tirelessly for the fulfillment of their dream of one day seeing the French Canadian Catholics win economic victory in the « Kingdom of the Saguenay ».

#### A MORE GENERAL VIEW OF THE PROVINCE

So much for the areas of particular research. But how typical are these findings of the attitudes and initiatives of the Church elsewhere in the province? A more general survey of the province does not on the whole seem to turn up a strikingly different picture. For example, the local curés elsewhere are not only promoting the extension of railways but are often actively engaged in the humble task of building secondary roads, culverts, and bridges. For example, in the annual reports to the provincial government on « colonization roads and bridges », either already built or recommended to be built shortly, we find under the title, « Overseers, Contractors, etc., » the name of priests appear about 40 times each year during the period 1896-1914.<sup>21</sup> Most of these priests seem to have been under direct contract from the government to carry out this essential work in the more remote settlement areas.

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(20) Letter of Mgr. Labrecque to Mr. N. Garneau, February 5, 1904, cited in *Le Progrès du Saguenay*, January 24, 1907.

(21) For example, see *Sessional Papers* :  
 XXX (1896), Part III, 209-312 ;  
 XXXIII (1900), Part I, 1-93 ;  
 XXXVIII (1905), Part I, 1-122 ;  
 XLIII (1910), Part II, 1-177 ;  
 XLVIII (1914), Part IV, 4-129 ;

Elsewhere, the curés also remain directly involved in the promotion of more scientific agriculture. In 1896, the names of priests are found as presidents or secretaries of 166 out of a total of 389 agricultural clubs and societies in the province. Nor are these farmer priests concentrated in any particular region of the province, for we find them holding these positions in 46 out of the 62 counties. Thereafter, their number seems to drop slowly as laymen take over these administrative posts, but as late as 1914 the clergy still held these offices in 114 out of the total 689 agricultural clubs and societies with a membership of 65,324.<sup>22</sup>

A survey undertaken by Hormisdas Magnan for the Department of Colonization, Mines and Fisheries, in 1913, to enquire into the economic situation and particular needs of the 270 parishes of the province which were still asking for settlers, confirms this rather general interest of the clergy in economic development. Since he depended on the local curés for his information, his survey provides us with an excellent opportunity to become better acquainted with their preoccupations at this time.<sup>23</sup> The fact that these parishes represent about 29 per cent of the total 942 parishes of the province and are scattered over 42 of its 62 counties gives us sufficient assurance that we are not dealing here with a narrowly localized phenomenon. The Curés interpret the needs and possibilities of their parishes as follows: 155 ask for additional farm settlers; 64 do not ask for additional farm settlers;<sup>24</sup> 116 invite new industries to come into their parishes — 5 specifying that they want pulp or paper mills, 42 remarking on the sources of waterpower available locally to furnish power for industry, several not indicating exactly what kind of industry they want, but those who do specify a very wide range including sawmills, flour mills, woollen and cotton mills, clothing and shirt factories, wood industries of all kinds (especially furniture factories), foundries, tanneries, brickyards, cheese and butter factories, food preserving industries, etc.; 22 remark on the mineral resources available in their parishes, and 7 invite companies to come in to exploit them; 17 ask for factory workers, while the majority ask for additional doctors, notaries, tinsmith, shoemakers, plumbers, tailors, etc.; 7 invite

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(22) *Sessional Papers*, XXX (1896), Part II, 29-59; and XLVIII (1914), Part I, 211-252.

(23) HORMIDAS MAGNAN, *Monographies paroissiales*, 2d ed.; Quebec, Department of Colonization, Mines and Fisheries, 1913), p. 3.

(24) In many parishes, it is not clear whether or not they are excluding farm settlers from the settlers they do ask for; in any case, they do not formally ask for them.

banks into their parishes; and many comment on the touristic attractions of their region, especially its natural beauty and hunting and fishing facilities.

Finally, our survey of all the province's parish and regional histories during this period confirms our suspicion that such attitudes and initiatives on the part of the clergy were widespread in French Canada.<sup>25</sup> Of the 194 parish and regional histories reviewed, 99 do not touch on this economic role of the clergy. These latter histories are, for the most part, either purely religious in character, mere catalogues of the names of past officials and curés of the parish, or are interested in the family trees of parishioners, or are histories prepared for tourists, or are written by politicians or manufacturers in the interests of their party or trade. Of the 95 histories that touch on the economy role of the curé in the parish most do so modestly. About 27 of these 95 histories are not written by members of the clergy, but their manner of treating this apparently delicate subject is not substantially different. Of the 95 authors indicated, 16 tell of curés who « peopled the land » and all this involved; 20, of curés actively promoting communications such as the construction of railways and roads; 29, of curés promoting better agriculture — especially the new dairy industry and better animal husbandry — at times, by personal example; 10, of curés promoting or actively managing the new caisses populaires; 37, of curés promoting or being actively involved in the introduction of modern utilities, such as electricity, the telephone, and water works, as well as of local industries into their parishes or regions; 47, of curés championing of better educational facilities, especially by founding model schools and academies in their parishes by introducing the Sisters or Brothers into the local parochial schools to overcome the marked instability of the system created by the very high turnover of schools mistresses; 7, of curés talking admiringly of the industrial successes scored in their region, leaving the definite impression that there was a warm collaboration between the Church and local industry; and one limits himself to the well-worn phrase, found so often

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(25) I consulted the 194 volumes of this collection which cover the period 1867-1914. This collection is available in a separate section at the Provincial Archives in Quebec City.

in in these histories, that the curé led his parish « into the way of progress ». <sup>26</sup>

However, even a cursory survey of the province seems to suggest that in Montreal the pattern prevalent elsewhere in the province is not easily discernible. Archbishop Bruchesi was here at times directly involved in settling strikes and especially in trying to instill into the growing worker population the virtues of hard work, justice, temperance, economy, and an appreciation of education. In Montreal it is obvious that the bishop and his clergy were still at a loss as to how to confront the new problems arising out of rapid industrialization and urbanization. And it is doubtful whether the *Ecole Sociale Populaire*, the group of clerical and lay specialists founded to study and educate both the people and the clergy on these new problems, had much influence before World War I, although they had by that time already published some 40 brochures devoted to such urban problems as labour conditions, temperance, mutual insurance, education, workers' and children's health, socialism, etc.

In Montreal, therefore, more than elsewhere in the province, the Church's direct role in economic development appears to have been very marginal at this time though she did consistently lend all her moral force to help provide management with a sober, hardworking, peaceful labour force. Since the metropolis did not have its own official Catholic newspaper sponsored by the hierarchy, we find less ready-at-hand evidence of the Church's day-to-day attitudes and involvements in the industrial development of the city — if, in fact, as we suspect, they did exist to a greater degree than our scanty evidence indicates. However, here in the stronghold of Anglo-Saxon industrialists and capitalists, it is not surprising that even when the Church's attitude was most positive it was not coloured by the exuberant enthusiasm that characterized her warm welcome of French Canadian industry in the Saguenay.

(26) This evidence is the more remarkable since it usually understates the facts. As the sociologist Léon Gérin observes, « ... all these histories have a grave defect: they confine themselves too exclusively to the religious history of the parish. The agricultural, industrial, economic and social side of parish life is forgotten or neglected ». (Léon Gérin, « Notre mouvement intellectuel », *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada VII* (Second Series, 1901), Section I, p. 158). For example, we find from other sources that the local clergy were directly involved in the administration not of 10 but of 80 per cent of the *caisses populaires* that is, in 138 out of 171 *caisses* founded between 1900 and 1920 (Yves Roby, *Alphonse Desjardins et les caisses populaires, 1854-1920*, Montreal, Fides, 1964, pp. 113-114).



## Summary

Among the more interesting findings of this research are the following. There appears to be little hard evidence that the Catholic Church exercised a significantly negative influence on the economic spurt that took place in Quebec in the period 1896-1914. In fact, this Church, which has commonly been portrayed in Anglo-Saxon circles as being a major negative force impeding economic development in the area, seems to have been more concerned about and more deeply and directly involved in the promotion of such development than Churches ordinarily are in Anglo-Saxon countries. The Church's attitudes and initiatives that bear on economic development seem to have been more immediately related to French Canadian nationalist, cultural, and language interests than to theological or strictly religious teachings. There does not appear to have been any general sense of crisis among the Catholic clergy in the face of rapid industrialization, but only a determined effort to use these new developments to the benefit of their people without allowing them to submerge their national and religious values. Whatever sense of crisis did exist stemmed not from the presence of the economic spurt but rather from the mass emigration of French Canadians to the United States. And this was primarily a crisis of racial survival, and only secondarily a matter of religious concern, even though « French » and « Catholic » interests were in practice considered all but identical.

Among the more important changes adopted by the Church at this time were the acceptance of the principle of trade unionism and the promotion of various kinds of cooperative economic associations among the French Canadians to teach them to overcome through group-action the glaring economic disadvantages to which their rugged individualism had always exposed them in the past, as well as to protect them religiously from the undesirable influences of neutral and American associations. The ebb in the agricultural interest represented a recognition and a gamble that industrialization would provide an alternative solution to mass emigration to the United States, but enthusiasm for it was tempered in proportion as the French Canadians had less say in its organization. As long as they continued to comprise the mass of unskilled labour, ever subject to sudden unemployment, the agricultural interest would have a potential preference, not primarily for religious reasons but simply because here the French Canadians were in control, masters of their own destiny, and more economically secure.

Particularly fascinating is the amazing adaptability of the local curé, who quite independently of his past upbringing and experience usually manages to blend his life with the needs and aspirations of his parish and to become its intermediary with the outside world and with the world of Anglo-Saxon businessmen. But it is also striking to see the wide variety of concrete interpretations which different bishops and priests put on the one absolute Catholic qualification to economic progress, namely, that it must not be permitted to turn men away from their primary goal of union with God. Thus far, in this brief report, we have discussed only the bishops and the local curés or parish priests. It is important to add a word on another sizeable group of the clergy, namely, the professors and writers, for they are the group most often cited in current studies on French Canada.

These professors and writers are among the less concretely involved members of the clergy and so are freer to indulge in speculation, criticism, and even day-dreaming and, because of their loftier positions, their opinions and views tend to range over a wider gamut of interests than those of the bishop or ordinary curé. Besides, being classical scholars, they can bring to bear all the resources of rhetoric and literature to the expression of their ideas. From their ranks emerge men such as Mgr. Laflamme, who probably did more at this time than any other single person in the province of Quebec to promote more reliable surveying, scientific forestry, and the popularization of elementary ideas of forest, land, and waterpower conservation; Mgr. Lapointe, who not only dreamt about but actually worked for a French Canadian industrial and agricultural « kingdom » in the Saguenay; Abbé Baillargé, who produced the first Canadian economic textbook; the Trappist monks of Oka, who year by year improved the standards of their agricultural college and published many learned tracts on agriculture. But in this group we also find diffident men, prophets of doom, who seemed more familiar with the daily happenings in ancient Rome and Greece and modern France than with those which were taking place in the province and cities where they lived; men, who with the best of good will could naively lead parents to believe that a four or five year elementary commercial course could equip their sons to enter on any commercial or industrial career whatsoever; agriculturalists, who without ever having put their hand to the plough and quite innocent of the least realistic knowledge of the farming resources of the province, could from their ivory towers direct their race further northward onto the rocks of the forbidding Canadian Shield, steadfastly refusing to accept as real the

hard facts of industrialization and urbanization that were swirling around them; zealous « nationalists », who, in spite of episcopal cautions to the contrary, set about teaching a whole generation of college students to tighten still closer the race-religion binomial and reject every semblance of compromise; journalists, who, like some of their lay contemporaries, often seemed to delight more in endless dialectical battles with their adversaries, especially on the question of educational reform, than in proposing positive alternatives and mutually acceptable *ad hoc* solutions such as the bishops and the curés, closer to reality, were forced to find; orators, who could on special occasion make the French Canadians forget their inferior position in both society and industry in Canada with the tempting myth — which found an echo in every French Canadian heart — that somehow they were still successfully carrying out that providential mission, inherited from « Catholic » France, of civilizing and Christianizing the peoples of the world, and that they, and not the « money-grubbing » Anglo-Saxons, had in spite of all appearances to the contrary, the far greater destiny. Finally, in this group were the colonization and agricultural missionaries, many of whom were also curés. These were by designation « special pleaders », and were thus allowed full freedom to put spiritual and nationalist values on their particular goals of teaching the people to appreciate better the dignity of intelligent agriculture and the glory of conquering new uninhabited forest lands for their race and religion. Quite obviously, it is rather hazardous to cite any one spokesman from among this second group of the clergy as fully representative of the opinion of the French Canadian clergy.

On the thorny subject of education we limit ourselves here to this brief summary statement. The Church threw her full moral influence, manpower and finances into improving both school attendance and the quality of primary education, but she adamantly refused to see the state wrestle from her any of her predominant influence by introducing compulsory, free, and uniform education, or by putting education under a minister of education selected from the ranks of the party in power. Likewise, she held fast to the program of her classical colleges and insisted that the new technical education should be organized parallel to these colleges and without changing them into specialized schools. For the rest, she gave full support to technical and scientific education, but remained ever wary lest the introduction of this new type of education become the Trojan horse by which « neutral » schools might surreptitiously pierce the defenses of the citadel of Catholic education.

Although it is outside the scope of this paper to study directly the very interesting question of why the French Canadians seem to have played such a minor role in initiating industrialization in Quebec, nevertheless, I would like to observe that there is ample evidence to suggest that if, from the economic point of view, the Church was at fault in this area, it was precisely for having built and maintained a sort of « Chinese wall » around her people to preserve their culture, language, and religion integrally. It is open to debate whether the wall needed to be built so high and so thick and to have so few gates and lookouts in order to achieve this goal, but it still seems true that it is from this first decision more than from any other minor later decisions or particular faults in the educational system, stems French Canadian economic inferiority — for the real enemy has always been lack of communication. This people continued to speak and move outside the Anglo-Saxon world of business. And only today has the government finally determined to second the efforts of budding French Canadian entrepreneurs, engineers, and scientists and to help put them on a footing of competition with their long-ensconced, long-privileged Anglo-Saxon rivals.

Finally, one cannot help being struck by the obvious lack of proportion between the Church's ceaseless endeavours to foster a multitude of initiatives having a direct or indirect bearing on economic development and the relatively meagre results which these efforts seem to have achieved. Clearly, the major levers of rapid economic development are not to be sought in the attitudes and initiatives of the Catholic Church, however great her influence, but rather in more prosaic economic factors such as entrepreneurship, abundant capital, and technical know-how.

Our study provides little basis for the categoric affirmations of certain authors who claim that religion is a purely negative force in economic development or that the religious interest is fundamentally antagonistic to the economic interest. Rather it tends to confirm the thesis that there is no necessary inconsistency between the « Catholic ethic » and the « development ethos ». And it would seem to indicate serious reservations on certain current studies that assume that it is relatively easy to trace specific economic attitudes to particular theological systems. Our own study suggests that it is exceedingly difficult at times to isolate economic influence by the religious as distinct from the ethnic, the cultural, and the minority factor in a given situation.

The lines of research indicated in order to make our study more general and complete would seem to be the following:

- 1) to study the attitudes and initiatives of the English-speaking Catholic minority in Quebec over this period;
- 2) to attempt to pursue much more carefully the study of the significance of the Catholic « monopoly » of education and the question whether priests, brothers, and sisters are in fact by their peculiar unworldly vocation not the best persons to prepare students integrally for their role in society as future citizens, and to what extent the classical system of education is responsible for a certain neglect and lack of appreciation of technical and scientific know-how;
- 3) to pursue research in more detail in the Montreal area, especially in such suburbs as St. Henri and Lachine where there is some evidence that the same pattern of Church action found in the smaller centres throughout the province is repeated; and
- 4) to complement the fragmentary discussion of Church properties, revenues, and investments with more detailed research into these areas.

Finally, on the international level, the results of this study suggest that another Catholic country should be studied in a comparable period of economic development; but it should be preferably a country where the elements of nationalism, racial survival, and minority consciousness are not so intimately linked with the interests of the Catholic religion, and where industrialization depends primarily on local Catholics and not on an outside group. Such a study would enable us to understand better to what degree the religious factor is separable from the ethnic or national factor in the process of economic development. We could thus discover whether the Church has the ability to adapt its educational system to immediate practical needs more rapidly when her control is not in jeopardy and the language of business and commerce is her own; to what extent, in these different circumstances, the local priest continues to fill the role of being an intermediary between outsiders and new ideas and ways and his own people who trust his leadership and judgment; and, finally, to what extent the philosophy of agriculturism is present and swings in intensity with the swings of the business cycle, as it seems to do in French Canada.

An accumulation of such detailed studies would permit better understanding of how to enlist the manifest energies of the Church to promote economic development in Catholic underdeveloped countries and to reduce to a minimum the latent obstacles, which, she might put in its ways — obstacles, as this study suggests, that usually do not stem from her essential theology and teaching but rather from concrete circumstance.

## LE DÉVELOPPEMENT ÉCONOMIQUE DU CANADA FRANÇAIS ET L'ÉGLISE CATHOLIQUE

Cette étude nous a permis de constater nombre de choses intéressantes entre autres : qu'il n'est pas exact de prétendre que l'Eglise catholique ait exercée une influence négative déterminante dans le développement économique qui s'est manifesté au Canada français durant la période 1896-1914. Loin d'être une entrave, il est possible d'affirmer que cette Eglise s'est probablement montrée plus consciente du facteur économique et s'y est plus directement identifiée que ne le font généralement les Eglises anglo-saxonnes. Nous avons constaté de plus que l'enseignement théologique ou religieux cédait le pas aux questions économiques et culturelles et que loin d'être effrayée par le phénomène d'industrialisation intense qui se manifestait alors, l'Eglise s'efforça de canaliser cette énergie nouvelle à l'avantage du peuple faisant en sorte cependant que ne soient pas submergées les valeurs nationales et religieuses. Le grand problème de l'époque n'était pas l'explosion économique mais plutôt l'immigration en masse vers les Etats-Unis. Il s'agissait bien plus d'une crise raciale que religieuse, même si l'on identifiait alors « français » et « catholique ».

Au nombre des changements importants qui reçurent l'appui de l'Eglise à cette époque, figurent l'avènement du syndicalisme, et la mise en place d'associations de tout genre axées sur le principe de la coopération qui allait permettre aux Canadiens-français toujours foncièrement individualistes, de grouper leurs forces en vue de rattraper le terrain perdu sur le plan économique, sans pour cela perdre de vue la protection des valeurs spirituelles constamment menacées par les influences étrangères. L'intérêt moins marqué pour l'agriculture s'expliquait par le fait que nombreux étaient ceux qui voyaient dans l'essor industriel une solution de rechange valable qui permettrait d'enrayer l'immigration en masse vers les Etats-Unis. Ceux qui raisonnaient ainsi oubliaient qu'en fait les Canadiens français avaient très peu à dire dans la mise en place des nouvelles structures, car aussi longtemps qu'ils continueraient à former la masse des travailleurs non spécialisés, l'agriculture resterait pour eux un débouché naturel, non pour une simple question de religion, mais tout simplement parce que c'était ce domaine qui leur était le plus familier et où ils pouvaient espérer rester maîtres de leur destinée et se sentir économiquement libres.

Il est assez étonnant de constater avec quelle facilité le curé de paroisse, dont la formation et l'expérience étaient pourtant d'un tout autre ordre, savait non

seulement apprécier les besoins et les aspirations de ses ouailles, mais aussi leur servir d'intermédiaire avec le monde extérieur et les hommes d'affaires anglo-saxons. Ce qui surprend peut-être encore plus c'est de voir la multiplicité des mesures qu'employaient les évêques et les prêtres qui, tout en encourageant le développement économique, voulaient éviter qu'il ait comme conséquence de détourner les hommes de Dieu. Notre étude n'a porté jusqu'ici que sur l'influence des évêques et des curés, mais il ne faudrait pas oublier pour autant de mentionner ce secteur important du clergé que formaient les professeurs et les écrivains dont il est si souvent fait mention dans toutes les études traitant du Canada français.

Ces professeurs et écrivains, étant moins directement engagés que les autres membres du clergé, pouvaient plus facilement raisonner sur le plan spéculatif, critiquer plus librement, et parfois même se laisser aller à la rêverie. Leur situation particulière à l'intérieur de la société leur permettait une sphère de rayonnement beaucoup plus étendue que celle des évêques et des simples curés ; de plus, leurs études classiques et leurs connaissances de la rhétorique et de la littérature, leur permettaient d'exprimer leurs idées avec beaucoup plus de force et d'assurance. Nous trouvons dans leurs rangs des hommes de très grande valeur : Mgr Laflamme, dont les réalisations dépassèrent de beaucoup celles de tout autre personne durant cette période de l'histoire de la province de Québec et qui, en plus d'encourager de meilleures techniques d'arpentage et de développement rationnel de la forêt, fit un effort réel pour vulgariser les techniques concernant l'exploitation forestière, la connaissance des sols et le développement des ressources hydrauliques ; Mgr Lapointe, homme d'action qui se dépensa sans compter pour que s'instaure un royaume agricole et industriel dans la région du Saguenay ; l'abbé Baillairgé, à qui l'on doit le premier traité canadien d'économie politique ; et enfin les moines de la trappe d'Oka qui, d'année en année, améliorèrent les méthodes d'enseignement de leur école et publièrent quantité d'ouvrages concernant la science agricole.

Il se trouvait par ailleurs dans ce groupe des hommes timorés, prophètes de malheur, beaucoup plus familiers avec tout ce qui se passait à Rome, en Grèce ou en France qu'avec les nouvelles lignes de pensée qui avaient cours dans la province et dans leur ville ; peut-être de bonne foi, mais bien naïvement, ils laissaient croire aux parents qu'il suffisait à leurs enfants d'avoir une éducation commerciale de quatre à cinq ans pour se tailler une place enviable dans le commerce ou l'industrie. Il faudrait mentionner aussi ceux qui, n'ayant aucune expérience pratique en agriculture et des connaissances très superficielles quant aux ressources agricoles de la province, restaient enfermés dans leur tour d'ivoire et encourageaient l'immigration vers le nord, vers ce pays de roches du bouclier canadien, ignorant complètement l'essor industriel et le phénomène d'urbanisation qui éclataient de toute part.

Que dire de ces zélés nationalistes qui, en dépit des mises en garde de l'évêque, se mirent à enseigner à toute une génération d'étudiants des collèges que la race et la religion sont intimement reliées et qu'il faut rejeter tout compromis ! Que dire aussi des journalistes qui — comme plusieurs de leurs contemporains laïques — préféraient se délecter dans des batailles de mots avec tous ceux qui différaient d'opinion avec eux, tout particulièrement au sujet des questions concernant la réforme de l'enseignement, plutôt que de proposer des solutions pratiques acceptables tout comme les évêques et les curés, plus proches de la réalité, avaient été obligés de trouver !

Il y avait aussi tous ces tribuns qui cherchaient à faire oublier aux Canadiens français leur statut d'infériorité sur le plan social et industriel en faisant miroiter à leurs yeux le mythe, qu'inconsciemment ils chérissaient dans leur cœur : la mission qu'ils avaient héritée de la France, fille aînée de l'Eglise, de civiliser et christianiser les peuples du monde — rôle qui, disaient-ils, était de beaucoup supérieur aux aspirations purement matérialistes des anglo-saxons.

Nous trouvons enfin dans cette catégorie les prêtres missionnaires agricoles et colonisateurs, dont plusieurs étaient des curés. Ceux-ci, en raison de leur fonction particulière, étaient des partisans, des propagandistes. Il leur était alors loisible de se servir des valeurs spirituelles et nationales pour atteindre leur objectif : enseigner à la population de mieux apprécier la dignité d'une agriculture intelligente et la gloire de conquérir et de défricher des terres boisées au nom de la race et de la religion. Il est évident qu'il serait plutôt osé de considérer l'un quelconque des prêtres de cette catégorie comme étant vraiment représentatif de l'opinion du clergé canadien-français.

Sur le sujet très épineux de l'éducation nous nous limiterons ici à quelques brèves observations. L'Eglise avec ses ressources financières et son apport de personnel a usé de toute son influence morale pour encourager la fréquentation scolaire et améliorer la qualité de l'enseignement dispensé au niveau primaire. Par ailleurs, elle refusait catégoriquement de céder quelque parcelle que ce soit de l'influence prédominante qui était sienne dans ce domaine pour permettre à l'Etat de légiférer concernant l'enseignement obligatoire et gratuit, l'uniformité des programmes. Elle refusait de systématiquement de laisser le gouvernement créer un ministère de l'éducation. L'Eglise, de plus, tenait farouchement aux programmes d'étude de ses collèges classiques et insistait pour que le nouveau secteur de l'enseignement technique opère en parallèle avec ces collèges, sans changer ceux-ci en écoles spécialisées. En règle générale, l'Eglise donnait tout son appui à l'enseignement technique et scientifique, mais restait sur le qui-vive craignant que ce nouveau type d'enseignement ne devienne le cheval de Troie qui, sournoisement, permettrait à l'école neutre d'envahir la place forte de l'école confessionnelle à l'intérieur de la province.

Il est possible de croire que si selon une perspective économique l'Eglise a pu faire fausse route dans ce domaine, c'est précisément pour avoir érigé et maintenu l'équivalent d'un mur de chine destiné à protéger suivant elle des valeurs vitales : culture, langue et intégrité de la religion. L'économique n'avait pourtant ainsi rien à faire avec cette décision. On peut se demander si cette muraille avait besoin d'être érigée aussi imposante et aussi hermétique pour atteindre cette fin. Cette décision, beaucoup plus que n'importe quelle autre, ne fut pas en définitive la cause de l'état d'infériorité des Canadiens français dans le domaine économique, état de chose qui a toujours découlé du manque de communication. Le peuple s'exprimait et vivait en marge du monde des affaires anglo-saxon. Ce n'est que tout dernièrement que le gouvernement s'est enfin décidé à seconder les efforts de la nouvelle vague des entrepreneurs canadiens-français, des ingénieurs et des scientifiques, et de les mettre en position de concurrencer leurs rivaux anglo-saxons déjà solidement en place et bénéficiant d'une situation privilégiée.

Finalement, comment expliquer le décalage existant entre l'effort déployé par l'Eglise, et les nombreuses initiatives qu'elle a à son crédit dans le domaine du



développement économique, et les maigres résultats obtenus. Il est évident que l'essor économique qui s'est manifesté à différents degrés à l'intérieur du Québec ne peut être attribué aux seules attitudes et initiatives de l'Eglise catholique, quelque importante que fut sa contribution, mais est plutôt attribuable à des facteurs plus tangibles tels que : l'esprit d'entreprise, l'abondance de capital et le savoir faire technique.

Rien dans notre étude permet de conclure, comme certains l'ont fait *a priori*, que la religion peut retarder le développement économique ou encore que le spirituel soit l'ennemi du matériel. Au contraire notre étude nous a convaincu que les intérêts de l'Eglise et ceux de l'économie pouvaient très bien aller de pair. Et à ce sujet disons que nous acceptons avec beaucoup de réserves les conclusions de certaines études, à l'effet qu'il est assez facile d'identifier les comportements économiques aux doctrines théologiques. Au contraire, notre étude nous incite à croire qu'il est parfois extrêmement difficile, à l'intérieur d'un certain comportement économique, d'isoler l'influence religieuse de l'influence ethnique et culturelle, et d'ignorer l'incidence du fait minoritaire de tout un groupe.

Les recherches qu'il nous faudrait faire pour compléter cette étude et lui donner une portée plus générale seraient :

1.—De voir qu'elles ont été les attitudes et initiatives prises, durant la même période, par les églises catholiques de la minorité anglo-saxonne du Québec ;

2.—De pousser plus avant nos recherches et d'étudier de plus près : (a) quelle a été la conséquence du contrôle quasi exclusif qu'a exercé l'Eglise durant cette période dans le domaine de l'éducation ; ( ) d'établir s'il est bien vrai que la vocation de prêtres, de frères ou de soeurs s'allie difficilement au rôle d'éducateurs chargés de former les citoyens de demain et (c) de voir dans quelle mesure les études classiques sont responsables du peu d'intérêt manifesté par le peuple pour tout ce qui touchait à la technique et au savoir faire scientifique ;

3.—D'examiner de plus près la situation qui existait dans la région de Montréal, tout particulièrement dans des centres comme Saint-Henri et Lachine qui, croyons-nous, refléterait assez fidèlement l'action de l'Eglise dans tous les petits centres de la province ;

4.—De compléter nos données fragmentaires concernant les biens de l'Eglise, ses revenus en propre et ses placements, de manière à pouvoir contrôler de plus près l'exactitude de certaines conclusions.

Il serait intéressant de voir comment cadrent les conclusions de notre étude sur le plan international en examinant quelles ont été, dans un autre pays catholique, les tendances de développement économique, il faudrait choisir, de préférence, un pays où le nationalisme, la survivance raciale et le fait minoritaire ne sont pas intimement liés aux intérêts de la religion catholique, et où l'essor industriel dépend directement, non d'une caste étrangère mais bien des ressortissants catholiques eux-mêmes. Une telle étude permettrait de mieux comprendre jusqu'à quel point le facteur religion peut jouer, indépendamment du facteur ethnique et national, dans le processus du développement économique. Il faudrait de plus voir, non seulement dans quelle mesure l'Eglise est capable d'adapter son système éducatif plus efficacement aux réalités économiques quand elle exerce un contrôle

absolu et une influence déterminante dans le domaine des affaires et du commerce, mais aussi jusqu'à quel point, dans ces conditions, le curé de paroisse peut continuer à servir d'intermédiaire entre le monde extérieur et les tendances qui s'y manifestent et ceux qui le reconnaissent comme chef de file, et ont foi dans son jugement. Il faudrait enfin voir dans quelle mesure la philosophie agricole peut varier parallèlement aux fluctuations du cycle économique comme cela semble être le cas au Canada français.

Une étude poussée dans cette direction nous permettrait de mieux juger comment il serait possible de canaliser la force de l'Eglise en vue de promouvoir le développement économique des pays catholiques moins favorisés et de neutraliser, dans la mesure du possible, les reculs qui pourraient découler d'attitudes qui, comme le démontre notre étude, n'ont pas de relations directes avec son enseignement et sa théologie mais découlent plutôt de réalités concrètes étrangères au facteur religion.

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numéro spécial

de

**Chronique sociale de France**

cahier 1, janvier-février 1966

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Chronique sociale de France, 6 parutions par an. Abonnement: France: 20 francs; Etranger: 22.50. Periodica, Inc., 5090, avenue Papineau, Montréal, 34.